

# LISTENING SKILLS

## What makes a good listener?

- Conducting conversation without interrupting each other
- Showing empathy (not criticizing, arguing or patronizing)
- Establishing a physical sense of closeness without invading personal space
- Using body language that shows you are open and attentive
- Offering your own self-disclosures (not too many, or too soon)
- Try your best to understand the context of the other person's life when exchanging experiences

## Active Listening

Proper listening conveys the idea that *"I'm interested in you as a person and I think what you say is important. I want to give you a quality response."*

1. Make a commitment to hold yourself accountable for each situation where you will be listening.
2. Give each person a clean slate when you begin to listen to them, not allowing yourself to listen from the past.
3. Put aside any distractions from phones to mental stresses.
4. Ask questions for clarification when it is appropriate.
5. Expect to learn something from each listening encounter.
6. Show that you are listening by attentive and open body language; nodding, eye contact and quick verbal agreements can let the person know you are paying attention to what they are saying.
7. Listening without interruption requires one speaker at a time.
8. Allow speaker to tell their story, avoid making judgments and trying to sway them toward a particular outcome.